

Hablitzia accessions November 2015

1) Bergstua – my oldest plant originates in Sweden; unknown background

2) Wild collected Sergey Banketov, Mountain Mashuk in Pyatigorsk, Caucasus

3) Armenia I / Wild collected by Justin West and Li An Phoa : uncertain if descendents of these plants still live as Justin had problems growing them in New York (too warm?). It has been suggested that Martin Crawford's plants originate from that collection, but Martin also had a plant from me (to be checked)

3) Espoo: The seeds were collected by Leena Linden on 10.9.2009 at the Department of Applied Biology at the University of Helsinki who sent them on to Stephen Barstow, 7563 Malvik, Norway who is coordinating the collection of *Hablitzia* material in the Nordic countries. Full story (from Leena's overview report April 2010): (seeds collected 10th of September 2009) This patch I sent to Stephen. I collected the seeds myself from two plants of the same strain growing in the garden of Mrs. Birgitta Renqvist-Laitinen in Espoo (60°N 24°E, the address is Kuninkaantie 39 B, FIN-02940 Espoo, Finland, tel. +358 40 700 6870). I found the site on the basis of dried *Hablitzia* samples in the collection of the Herbarium of the Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki. There were two *Hablitzia* samples collected from the same Espoo garden in August 1968, and the plant was still there! *Hablitzia* was brought to Espoo by engineer G. V. Renqvist who bought the house and garden in the early 60's. The present owner, Mrs. Renqvist-Laitinen, is daughter of G. V. Renqvist, who was a plant enthusiast, a keen gardener and teacher in the Technical College of Helsinki. Engineer Renqvist brought the plant to Espoo in the 60's from Parainen (60°N 22°E, on the south-western coast) where the family Renqvist had a villa. The *Hablitzia* growing in the villa garden was probably planted there by the father of engineer Renqvist, M.Sc. H. W. Renqvist (5.3.1851-28.1.1927). H. W. Renqvist was a teacher who lived and worked in Käkisalmi, Carelia (61°N 30°E), from 1880 until 1894 when he moved to Hanko, and in 1897 further to Turku. Hence, the family villa in Parainen (in the archipelago between Hanko and Turku, about 400 kms west from Käkisalmi) was probably bought between 1894 and 1927. Where H. W. Renqvist got his plant, is not known. Turku is kind of a gardening capital of Finland, where e.g. the first Finnish gardening school was founded in the mid-19th century. Plants of *Hablitzia tamnoides* were sold by at least one nursery in Turku in 1957 (price list nr 4 of Svenska trädgårdsskolan). The second wife of H. W. Renqvist, Alma Rosenborg (3.2.1871-18.10.1967), moved in her late years to Porvoo and took *Hablitzia* with her there too (Mrs. Renqvist-Laitinen showed me an article about her grandmother where *Hablitzia* was also mentioned). I checked Alma Rosenborg's place in Porvoo last autumn: there is nothing to be found anymore as the whole quarter was reconstructed some 10 years ago. Mrs Renqvist-Laitinen was aware of the rarity of *Hablitzia* and happy for our interest in it. There were two plants: one climbing on the wall of the old house and a child of that beside the veranda of the new house. The older plant was looking quite weak, shaded by a *Parthenocissus* and competing with tall grass. The younger one was doing better and probably was better cared for, too. I collected plenty of fruit from both, however the seed harvest was small, i.e. lots of empty fruit. **NORDGEN Yes**

4) Knut (Hadsel): Originally from the Hadsel plant; Received on visit to Draglands Planteskole June 2009. The mother plant was growing on the house wall of the neighbour's garden (Knut) and was for sale in the nursery.

5) Helsinki/Lammi : Full story (from Leena's overview report April 2010): (seeds collected in October 2009) This patch was sent to Merja. The seeds (about 30 in total) were received in mid-November from Mr. Veijo Miettinen who had collected them from his garden in Helsinki. The mother plant was probably born from the 1983 seed lot (number 1 above). Mr. Miettinen claims he originally had only one single plant (now there may be several as the plant self-seeds occasionally). He is convinced that *Hablitzia* is self-fertile. However, the seed yield varies from year to year. In 2009 there were not too many seeds in his plant, it seems these 30 were all he could scratch together. I sent the whole patch to Merja Hartikainen at MTT Agrifood Finland, to be planted in Wendla's Garden, a collection of garden plants typical for 19th century manor houses in Finland and plants otherwise considered as nationally valuable genotypes.

6) Lemnhult Vetlanda / Inger Lundström : Charlotte Knudsen kontaktet meg fordi hun hadde fått *Hablitzia* frø av Inger Lundström gjennom forumet alternativ.nu. Fra Lundström: Skall försöka besvara dina frågor. Jag har odlat *Hablitzia* i snart 20 år. Bytte till mig en självsådd liten planta under en växtbytarträff som hölls i vår ortagård.

Troligen var kvinnan som bytte den från Nässjö - Eksjötrakten, småländska höglandet. Har två plantor som båda sätter rikligt med frön. **NORDGEN Yes**

7) Jonathan Bates, USA (Rostock): Seed originally from "Universitat Rostock Botanischer Garten"

8) Lahti/Lammi: This is the second collection from Lahti/Lammi as last year's accession turned out to be *Chenopodium bonus-henricus*. From Leena Linden (email 020109): Only one nursery has plants of *Hablitzia* for sale in spring 2009, and they originate from seeds obtained via Maatiainen from a hobbyist at Lahti. From Leena Linden (email 200109): Lahti/Lammi old vicarage seeds come from the hobbyist at Lahti (61 degrees N, between 25 and 26 degrees E). She has grown her plant from seeds that she got from a friend, and the friend's plant was grown from seeds collected from the garden of Lammi old vicarage in the early 80's. The vicarage plants probably originated from the early 1900. Full story (from Leena's overview report April 2010):(seeds collected in September 2009) This patch was sent to Stephen. I got the seeds from the same lady as in January 2009, Mrs. Riitta Nuorivaara-Luhtanen. She was terribly sorry and ashamed for sending fake seeds last winter. This time there were remnants of the dried fruits (or sepals?) typical for *Hablitzia* in the seed bag as a proof of authenticity. I don't know if the seeds were collected from the donator's garden in Lahti or Luhanka, however, the origin of both is the same: Lammi old vicarage. **NORDGEN Yes**

9) Iisalmi/Estonia: From Leena Linden (email 020109): The origin of the plants grown in another Finnish nursery and those sold at a garden center in Helsinki is Estonia, where the species seems to have been more common than in Finland. Finnish hobbyist growers have imported *Hablitzia* in the 90's from Estonia, and they have delivered seeds to at least one nursery. I will (hopefully) receive and forward to you some of these estonian seeds too. They originate from a lady at Iisalmi, Central Finland, who told she brought one single *Hablitzia* plant from Estonia in 1998 ; From Leena Linden (email 200109): Iisalmi/Estonia seeds come from a lady at Iisalmi. She has brought the mother plant as a small plantlet from Estonia (near Tallinn) in about 1998. **NORDGEN Yes**

10) Piikkiö/Finland: A few weeks ago I found that there is *Hablitzia* growing in the garden of the Finnish Horticultural research institute at Piikkiö. They have got the seeds from an amateur in 1984, and her plant came originally from seeds collected from the Botanical garden of the University of Helsinki in the sixties. *Hablitzia* has been removed from the Botanical in the seventies, but it may be one of the very first places where the species ever has been cultivated in our country: in a Finnish gardening book from 1919 it is told that "*Hablitzia* is mainly grown in botanical gardens and by a few amateurs". At that time there was a true botanical only at Helsinki. I'm waiting for information on the origin of *Hablitzia* from the Botanical Garden, they should have it in their archives. **NORDGEN Yes**

11) Tampere/Finland: Collected by Leena Linden of Helsinki University, on 18th October 2009, who forwarded to; this is the second collection as the first had very poor germination; Full story (from Leena's overview report April 2010): (seeds collected 18th of October 2009) Seeds of this origin were sent to Stephen and Molly. I gathered the seeds from Tampere myself. The site and the strain is the same from which I sent seeds to Stephen in February 2009. The mother plant is very big, looks healthy and had lot of fruit capsules. The seed crop was anyhow much less than I imagined; many of the fruits must have been empty. I have tried to find out who lives in the house surrounded by the *Hablitzia*-covered hedge, without success. It looks quiet and there has been nobody at home during my visits. In October I left a letter in the mailbox of the house, where I told them about my interest in their hedge asking them to contact me, but I haven't got any reply. In a local history booklet I read that around the *Hablitzia* site (don't know exactly in which house) there lived between 1918 and 1932 a doctor of medicin who was a keen amateur gardener, breeding e.g. *Fuchsias* and *Geraniums*. *Hablitzia* could be a memory of him, but this is only a hypothesis, the history of the Tampere strain remains so far unsolved. **NORDGEN Yes**

12) Uppsala / Sweden: I was at a conference in Uppsala and took the opportunity to visit the botanical garden where Mattias Iwarsson of POM had told me that there had been a large *Hablitzia* when he was a student in the late 1960s. He put me in touch with Tomas Zicha who agreed to meet me on Friday morning. In the meantime, Mattias had visited the garden and reported the following . "I walked around the Orangery recently and noticed that they do still have a large plant there (in the courtyard). It is located only 10m from the old plant which I

found in 1968 when I was studying there)." Tomas showed me the plant which was not very vigorous and was creeping on the ground next to an archway. There were a number of seedlings around the plant and lots of seed some of which I collected. The plant appears to be of the "wild" type - small flowers and reddish stems, suggesting the plant had originated as a wild accession. The Botanical Garden's accession number is 0000-1249. The four zeros indicate that the accession predates 1950, before which time accession records do not exist.

NORDGEN Yes

13) Rimbo / Sweden: Received seed from Katriina Anttila (SESAM) in November 2015 - 5 *Hablitzia* plants are growing by the main building called The Farmer's House (Bondens hus) at Tolvmansgården in Rimbo, Sweden. This building was moved to its current location in the 1860's. Tolvmansgården is a farm, functioning today as a local heritage museum and activity center. Owner: Rimbo hembygdsförening (Rimbo Local Heritage Society). Their home page: <http://www.hembygd.se/rimbo> The society bought Tolvmansgården in 1967 and has worked since then to preserve the original farm and its buildings. Even most of the plants, including *Hablitzia*, growing on the farm, are expected to originate from the time before the heritage society bought the place, when it was still used as a farm and when there were people living at the place. Thus, the *Hablitzia* growing there must be at least 50 years old. Probably much more than that. Some of the members of the society that I talked with didn't know that the plant was edible. It is unsure if the plant originally was eaten, or just used as an ornamental. The placement of the plant in front of the main building somehow testifies at least its ornamental value for the farm people growing it. Katriina er Sesam member 1941 og skal tilby medlemmer frø.

14) Norrtälje /Sweden: Received seed from Katriina Anttila (SESAM) in November 2015 - One *Hablitzia* plant is growing by a toy shop called Dubbelboa Leksaker och Hobby. Address: Tillfällegatan 3, 76130 Norrtälje, Sweden. Owner of the shop: Bo and Ingrid Andersson. Their Facebook page: <https://sv-se.facebook.com/Dubbelboa-Leksaker-och-Hobby-304814032902981/> Talking to Bo Andersson, he said that the plant has been growing there even before the previous owners, who had the shop since the 1950's. So according to Bo Andersson, the plant is at least 50-60 years old. He didn't know that it is edible. By the way, Bo Andersson told me that botanists have been visiting this plant several times. They also told him not to destroy the plant, but to preserve it. Here is one picture account from a field trip that Gothenburg Botanical Society made to Uppland, and there are many pictures from this exact plant by the toy shop. <http://www.bfig.se/Upplandsecondday.html> By the way, Bo Andersson told me that botanists have been visiting this plant several times. They also told him not to destroy the plant, but to preserve it.

15) Ijevan Cave, Armenia: After much searching, Tycho Holcomb and Karoline Nolsø Aaen (aka Tycho and Caroline Rosehip) finally located a plant of *Hablitzia* in September 2014 in the southern Caucasus mountains in northern Armenia. Tycho wrote: "At last our search for the elusive wild Caucasian *Hablitzia* is successful! It seems to be a cave dwelling creature. Here in a prehistoric cave in Northern Armenia it's dominating the vegetation inside the drip line. My guess is that there were 50+ individuals in this one cave. The fact that they did not venture into the deciduous forest outside the cave makes me think that they're a cave-adapted species. Could it be that prehistoric people transported it from cave to cave or even semi-domesticated it? The cave was primarily south-facing, but densely shaded by Turkish tree hazel, maple, walnut, dogwood and a bush hazel. Even after a long hot summer here there were still some nice leaves to put in our lunch wraps:) See https://www.facebook.com/tycho.rosehip/media_set?set=a.942909679058693&type=3